

3 October 1960

HOME ONLY

[redacted] Chief

STAT

London Bureau, FBIS  
c/o American Embassy  
71 Grosvenor Square  
London W. 1, England

Dear Tom:

Subject: Moscow Coverage

This will acknowledge your letter of 20 September 1960 which I have read with considerable interest. I concur that action by you on this problem should be suspended. To pursue it further from London Bureau would appear to serve no purpose and might make it difficult in the future to conduct amicable relations with BBC on the subject of coverage.

Examination of our files here fails to produce written evidence that FBIS agreed to the BBC cuts in coverage in 1954. I believe that we simply accepted the situation as forced on us by the BBC. However, we made it quite specific in the minutes of the March 1955 Coordination Committee meeting that we did not consider BBC's proposed curtailment of coverage to be adequate in meeting FBIS requirements. Again, in the October 1955 meeting, FBIS placed on record a statement of its requirements on the BBC. In view of this written record, I cannot see how Campbell could expect to adhere to a 1954 agreement.

In summation, I feel that you have done an excellent job in presenting the FBIS position and in attempting to cause the BBC to live up to its share of the reciprocal arrangement. Any further dealings with BBC on this overall subject should probably be through correspondence between Campbell and me.

Sincerely,

[redacted]  
Chief, FBIS

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[redacted] /erc

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cc: [redacted]

Enc. File  
BBC File

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20 September 1960

EYES ONLY

[redacted] Chief  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service  
2430 E. Street N. W.  
Washington 25, D. C.

STAT

Dear Roger:

Subject: Moscow Coverage

I am sorry that the background paper I promised has been delayed, but I had hoped that the question of Moscow German coverage might be resolved if I waited another week.

John Campbell came in this morning to show me a copy of a letter Sir Beresford Clark has sent the Ambassador about a visit to Caversham and we took the opportunity to discuss several other questions. Among them was the question of coverage and the minutes of the last Coordination Meeting.

I mentioned once again that in the minutes of the meeting the BBC undertook to examine the statement of requirements of FBIS and to discuss this matter further with FBIS. I said that since nearly a year had elapsed I thought some sort of comment should be made by the BBC about specific questions raised by the minutes.

He said that it was not at all clear to him that the minutes required any comment from him, although he would examine them once more to see if any reply were required of the BBC.

In the course of the discussion which followed, he pointed out that FBIS and the BBC agreed in writing at the time of the BBC budget cut in 1954 to reduce coverage. That reduction, he said, was permanent because the BBC had never been allotted any money to restore the cuts made at that time. Furthermore, he said, it is absolutely clear that FBIS can get no more coverage unless it decides that it can do without some other coverage.

I replied that I did not see how one could consider a budget cut of a particular year necessarily permanent. I pointed out that since 1954 FBIS had considerably expanded its coverage whereas the BBC had reduced its coverage.

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He reiterated that what took place before 1954 did not count since FEIS had agreed to the BBC cuts and that that agreement is in writing and effective to this day. Actually, he said, the BBC had increased its coverage above the level of 1954 and was keeping pace with expansion.

He said as regards the FEIS expansion and coverage schedule that it was all very pretty but FEIS did not actually cover material on its coverage list. He cited what he said were the discrepancies between the actual coverage of Hanoi and the coverage schedule, which he had seen in Saigon. He added that there were many scores on which the BBC was dissatisfied with FEIS coverage, and this was particularly true of Chinese Regionals.

He then added that as the BBC had learned to compromise FEIS would have to compromise, and that if I would permit him to speak frankly, he felt I was less ready to compromise than many others.

I replied that FEIS in all my experience had taken its coverage schedule most seriously and that the schedule was carefully followed every place I had ever been. I said that if the BBC found fault with FEIS coverage or processing, it should make its difficulties known. Never, I added, had I heard of any BBC difficulty with FEIS that I had not handled immediately through the proper channels, and never had I known a complaint to go without some kind of corrective action or explanation. I said that I felt one could not compromise about important blocks of coverage such as 25 percent of the Serbo-Croat broadcasts from Moscow.

I fear that I annoyed John in pressing for an answer on this coverage matter, but I find myself in a rather difficult position. If I press for an answer, he becomes very unhappy; if I do not press, he remains silent about our questions for months or even a year.

Several times Washington has asked the BBC for items in messages or letters - the Moscow coverage, CRU papers, External Services schedule list, the C and W patch, and the routing of BBC requirements on Medbureau through Washington - and John has simply not answered its questions.

I shall not prejudice any future discussion that you or others will have about Moscow and other coverage with John by having any more exchanges with him along these present lines, although I think it sound that our discussions continued up to the point where his position of inflexibility became clear.

I am not enclosing any letter such as might have been written John from Washington as I had mentioned, as this letter almost

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coincides with [redacted] visit, and I presume you and he have  
discussed this matter and he will be talking with the BBC.

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Sincerely,

[redacted]  
Chief, London Bureau

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